

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Those Who Love Christ John 14:21-24

The passage that we will be examining this weekend is John 14:21-24. Let me read these verses for you. **"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."** (22) **Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?'** (23) **Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. (24) He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.'**" These words were given by Christ to His disciples in order to encourage them. And hopefully this is exactly what will happen to most of us this weekend as we consider these words. But these words can also be used to bring conviction and even to serve as a warning. What do I mean by this?

Many so-called Christians treat the commandments of Christ in the same way as they might treat food in a buffet line. They take what they want and leave the rest.

They are willing not to murder but they are unwilling to bear with one another. They are willing not to steal but they are unwilling to forgive one another. They are willing not to commit adultery but they are unwilling to turn from grumbling and complaining and so on and so on and so on.

This is a terrible thing. This is a tragic thing. Why? It is a terrible and tragic thing because it brings their professed love for Christ and even their professed relationship with Christ into question in contrast with those professing Christians who rather than picking and choosing are willing to obey all of Christ's commands no matter how challenging or personally costly that obedience might be for them.

The reality of what I have just shared with you hopefully will come alive for us this weekend as we once again go back to our study of the Gospel of John and look more carefully at the words that we have just read in **John 14:21-24**. So, what is the first thing that we learn from these verses? First of all, we learn two things characterize those who love Christ based on John 14:21. Let me read for you the first part of **John 14:21**. What does it say? **"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me."** Jesus in the first part of this verse shares with His disciple's two specific things that will characterize a person who truly loves Christ.

First of all, those who love Christ will "have" His commandments (John 14:21). What did Jesus mean by this?

Did He mean that His disciples would simply be familiar with His commandments or did He mean something else? I believe He meant something else. Why would I say this? I would say this because even those who hate Christ can in fact be very familiar with His commandments. Therefore "having" Christ's commandments must mean something other than simple familiarity.

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So, what would it mean to "have" the commandments of Christ? To "have" the commandments of Christ means not only that Christ's commandments are viewed as true but also as authoritative.

Those who by God's grace view Christ's commands in this way obviously will not take them lightly. They will reflect on them, they will meditate on them, they will exercise due diligence in attempting to see how those commands might apply to each and every situation of their lives.

Did Christ's disciples "have" His commandments in this way? I believe that they did. And hopefully the same thing could be said for us as well. Hopefully we also "have" the commandments of Christ in this way. But how would they have known whether or not they had the commandments of Christ in this way, and how can we know if we have the commandments of Christ in this way? They could have known and we can know based on certain evidence.

This leads us to the second thing that Christ told His disciples would characterize the life of someone who truly loved Him. And what would that be?

Those who love Christ will not only "have" His commandments but will keep them (John 14:21). Let us once again read **John 14:21. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me."**

This certainly is not a new theme. What did Jesus share with His disciples moments earlier in **John 14:15? He told his disciples, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."**

How do we know if we truly have the commandments of Christ? How do we know if we are taking His commandments seriously, viewing them as not only true but authoritative? We can know that we in fact "have" them when we find ourselves seeking to conform our lives to them, not just some of them, but all of them. And of course when we "have" the commandments of Christ in this way then we can know what? We can know that we do in fact love Jesus.

But why is this so important to know? What is the big deal about knowing whether or not we love Jesus? This question leads us to the second thing that we learn about those who love Christ from this passage.

Those who love Christ will not only be loved by Him, but also by His Father (John 14:21). Let us continue to read **John 14:21. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him."** Why is it important to have and keep the commandments of Christ? Why is it important to love Christ? It is important because it will produce a loving response, both by Christ and His Father. Isn't this what the passage says? **"And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him."**

Though Christ's disciples were already loved by Him and His Father based on John 13:1, Christ inferred in John 14:21 that they, in the future, would be loved in a new and special way. This should be clear to us from Christ's use of the future tense "shall be loved" and "I will love him."

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So, what would be this new and special way of loving them? This is what it would be. Christ would, in the future, for the very first time, disclose Himself to them fully. Let us continue to read **John 14:21**. "**He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.**"

But you might ask, "Hadn't Jesus already disclosed Himself to His disciples? Yes, He had already disclosed Himself to His disciples. But that disclosure was limited. It was limited not only by the fact that Jesus was not always present with them, but even when He was with them they were not always in the best position to understand or interpret what He was saying or doing. Why was that?"

It was that way because the Holy Spirit, or in other words "the Spirit of Truth," would only come upon them during the earthly ministry of Christ from time to time.

This is why they were able to embrace Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God while at the same time being confused by so many other things that Christ said and did. This is also why they so often times found themselves struggling with their fleshly tendencies.

So, when would this future disclosure take place? It would not be possible until Christ ascended back to His Father and requested His Father to send the Spirit, not simply to be with them, but "in" them.

All this I believe was made clear to us last week in **John 14:16-20**. Let me once again read those verses for you. "**And I will [after my earthly departure] ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; [And who was that other helper according to John 14:26? The other helper that Christ promised His disciples was the Holy Spirit. And then what did Jesus say in verse 17?] (17) that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be [what?] in you. [Then Jesus went on to tell His disciples] (18) I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (19) After a little while the world will behold me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. (20) In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**" In what day would they know that Christ was in the Father? In what day would they know that they were in Christ? In what day would they know that Christ was in them?

They would know all of this on that day of Pentecost when Christ for the very first time would disclose Himself through the person of the Holy Spirit who would be sent to them by His Father and in response to His request as an expression of their love.

And how fully would He disclose Himself to them? He would disclose Himself to them without limitations. There would be no limitations. They would be able to see Him with the eyes of faith in ways that they had never been able to see Him before and experience Him in ways they had never experienced Him before.

And how did this impact their lives? They were transformed from a group of confused and weak-kneed disciples into a group of men that literally turned the world upside down. And guess what? The same thing can be for us as well and for the same reason.

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Those who presently love Christ can now experience a full disclosure of the person and work of Christ through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit (John 14:21). How can this be? They can experience this very same full disclosure of Christ through the indwelling Spirit because after Pentecost, God has faithfully given the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit to every individual who has, in their desire to be set free from sin and all of its consequences, embraced by faith Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

But of course, what I have just shared with you about Christ's future disclosure would have been very difficult for His disciples that evening in the upper room to understand since the Holy Spirit, or in other words the Spirit of truth, had not yet been given to them. So, in light of this what we read next is not very surprising at all.

Let me read for you **John 14:22. "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?'"**

So, who was Judas? Judas was one of Christ's disciples who in other passages is referred to as Judas of James or Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3, Luke 6:16). And what was his problem?

Judas (not Iscariot) believed that Christ's future disclosure would be physical in nature rather than spiritual and could not understand why He would only disclose Himself to a select group.

In other words, Judas thought that when Jesus was talking about this future disclosure, He was actually talking about that the future day when He would return and take them back to glory. And in light of this Judas could not understand why Jesus would not want to take advantage of the situation and set the whole world straight in terms of His true identity.

So, how did Christ respond to Judas of James, or Thaddeus? Let me read for you **John 14:23. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love Him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.'"**

This response by Christ to Judas' (not Iscariot) question leads us to a fourth thing that we learn about those who love Christ. Not only will they will they "have" and "keep" Christ's commandments, not only will those who love Christ be loved by both Christ and His Father, not only will they at the proper time be able to experience a full disclosure of the person and work of Christ through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit, but also those who love Christ will be able to enjoy an intimate relationship with the entire Godhead (John 14:23-24). Isn't this exactly what we just read in **John 14:23?**

Let us go back and read it once again. **"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love Him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.'"** Who will make their abode with him?

Christ and His Father, in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit, will make their abode with those who love Christ and keep His word (John 14:23).

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So, let me ask you this question. If God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make their abode with those who love Christ and keep His word, or in other words who keep His commandments, what is the only way for someone like ourselves to know whether or not God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have taken up their abode in us? The only way for us to know that is if we demonstrate our love for Him by keeping His commandments.

But can't we love Christ and not keep His commandments? Absolutely not! What does **John 14:24** tell us? "**He who does not love Me does not keep My words.**" The only person who would not keep Christ's commandments would be a person who did not in fact love Christ. And of course if a person did not love Christ, then certainly God the Father and God the Son would not come and indwell them in the person of the Holy Spirit. And how seriously should these disciples take these words that Jesus had just spoken? Let us finish reading the verse. "**And the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.**"

John 14:21-24 was given by Christ to His disciples in order to encourage them. And hopefully this is exactly what has happened to most of us this weekend. Hopefully in examining these verses it has become very clear to us that we in fact love Christ and are even now rejoicing in the assurance that God the Father, Son and Spirit are presently indwelling us, helping us to do His will and to fulfill the commandments that He has given us until we arrive in glory.

But even though this passage was originally shared with Christ's disciples in order to encourage them, it can also be used as warning to those professing believers who are approaching Christ's commandments as they would a buffet line, taking what they want and leaving the rest.

This may be an option from someone who does not love Christ, but certainly this is not an option for a disciple who does, and who has been lovingly entrusted with the abiding indwelling presence not only of Christ, but also of His Father in the person of the Holy Spirit.

So, if you happen to think you might be such a person this morning, you need to make sure that you are in fact a disciple of Christ.

May God give us the grace to understand the importance of "having" and "keeping" the commands of Christ, both in this life and the life to come.